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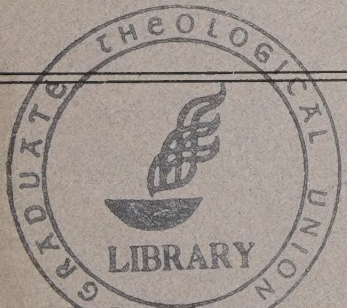
By

EMIL G. HIRSCH



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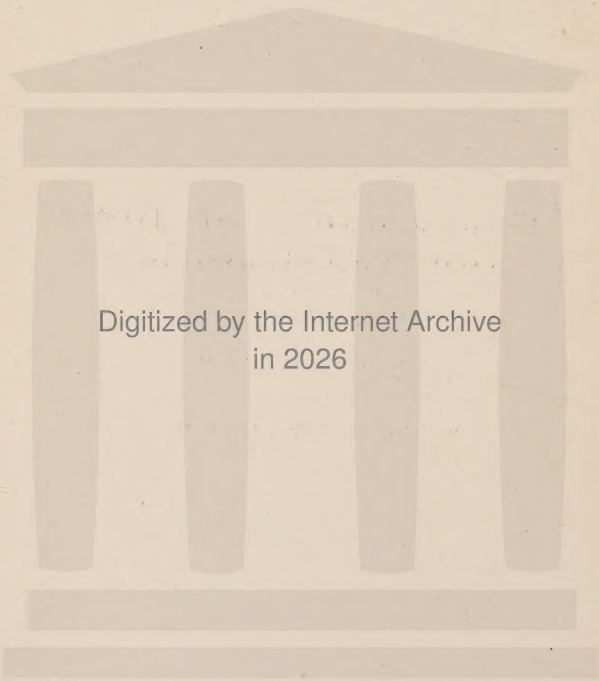

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THE CONCORDANCE OF JUDAISM AND AMERICANISM.

AN ADDRESS PREACHED AT THE MEMORIAL CELEBRATION IN SINAI TEMPLE, SUNDAY, NOV. 26, 1905.

BY EMIL G. HIRSCH.

Where the Canadian Pacific, that mighty miracle of modern man's daring and doing, winds its ever narrowing embrace of steel arms around the giant frame and then the snow-hooded brow of the mountain sentries mounting the guard over the Rockies' midcontinental bastion, the wondering traveler wheeled along this imperial highway's upward coil in dramatic suddenness is brought face to face with one of the most striking exhibitions of Nature's curious capriciousness. However much he may have been impressed with the defiant boldness that reckoned not the menace of the roaring canyons over which bridge and span are thrown in proud unconcern, or with the stupendous assumption of security that holds in contempt the perils of precipices along which the roadbed skirts with tenacious grit; when at the great divide he notices how the chance interval of a hair's breadth between the peak's wrinkles determines the direction of the water-rills and the leaping cascades, he is stirred to reflection as by no other observation. Twin children

of the clouds, cradled in one nursery, the raindrops are here bidden separate. One rushes on to his destiny, meeting in his descent the morning's sun, the other hastens to his goal in the van of the evening's approach. Spun on the same loom, one silvery ribbon unwinds its broadening folds until they are tangled in the Atlantic's mightier nettings; the other unbobbins its stretching lengths to festoon the slopes inclining toward the Pacific. Though he know the law which compels one of heaven's tears to seek its grave in the birth-chamber of the daystar and the other to hasten to its funeral in advance of the sinking sun, at the impressive recognition of the phenomenon in the concrete, the observant witness is involuntarily oppressed by the consciousness that similar "accidents" determine the direction of men's gropings and enforce divergency of paths leading to different and widely-separated destinies.

But this depressing obsession soon yields to the inspiring certainty that only in the seeming whim and chance preside over the alotting of our fortune. Closer attention to the intention which underlies Nature's dividing decree soon will reveal that underneath the superficial divergence is operative concordance of duty. Both waterdrops that at the line must part from each other are commissioned to one and the same task. It is theirs to coax forth flowers, to fertilize field and forest. Both are messengers and ministers of life. And again when they shall have reached their respective goals, be it the sea which laps the Eastern shores or that which sings the lullaby to the Western states, the miracle of the resurrection which awaits them will wing both alike to new upward flight and on the heights their divided destinies will finally converge. Seemingly doomed to eternal separation, snowflakes and dewdrops that part

company at the divide are foreordained to identity of obligation.

Thus when closer analysis unfolds this ethical purpose which, cloaked or clear, is always fundamental in the Universe and which is never dissipated even when the factoring process seems to reduce the all to incoherent fragments, caprice of division is at once lifted to the potency of planned appointment. Accident under this view takes on the consecration of vocation. Differences are blotted out in the recognition that they are means to an end, and in the prevision of this end divergence of paths sinks out of sight while identity of responsibility which neutralizes all variance of direction looms up large. Name the watersheds which force division and divergence upon men what you will, race, religion, nationality, at the great divide the space which separates is infinitesimal. These channels through which humanity runs on to its goal are means to a common end. On all them that along these divergent paths apparently tend apart in contrary directions, one common burden is imposed. Theirs is the equality of function under the variety and difference of equipment. Like the river systems draining into different oceans, the various and differently endowed components of humanity are appointed to fill earth with life, ever enriching and deepening and broadening. This conception reconciles diversity with unity. It sees in the polychrome spectrum only unfolding white light.

Little dower of imagination, I hold, is competent to apply the pathos and poetry of the watershed's influence upon the direction of the raindrop's ambition, to the symphonic theme of this memorial day's chorus. At first hearing, its jubilant notes seem to carry the invitation to remember differences. It is the landing of

JEWS that it commemorates. It seems to emphasize those distinctions that set off the Jew from his neighbor. Or again if stress be laid on the country's name whose hospitality these earliest immigrants of Jewish origin claimed, the intention of our synagogal celebration may be misunderstood as planned to throw on the screen the peculiarities of American Israel, enlarged out of all proportion and thus invigorate the American Jew's insistence upon being accorded a distinct position of his own in the common household of Israel.

But give this day's jubilee-overture a second hearing! If it be true—and it is—that man is microcosmic reproduction of the Universe's macrocosmos, then it is equally beyond all doubt that in the plan of God nations and peoples are called to be microcosmic illustrations of the plan of the macrocosmic humanity. To the American nation was assigned task and opportunity to exemplify essential unity notwithstanding the influence of the various watersheds at which the lines of descent diverge. Almost all the races of the planet have made this land their trysting ground. Hither they have brought the best and strongest which it was theirs to develop. Religion in this country re-enacts the Pentacostal outpouring; the flaming tongues that token of the spirit speak their message in varied tones and widely differing dialects. Social customs, the ripples from many distant sources, give color and mobility to home and exclusive circles. Even in the press and on the platform, in our streets and villages the confusion of languages is documented. This exceeding abundance of variety constitutes one of the secrets of this nation's nervous vitality. Apparent discordance results under the consecration of patriotism in effective harmony. True, this morning's festal reveille stirs to glad reflection only a little more than

one of the eighty millions of God's children that call America mother or spouse. Yet, it is not in conflict with, nay, it is in confirmation of America's distinctive genius that the commemorative occasion addresses its call to one alone of its many components and contributors. *E pluribus unum* formulates a truth, radiantly visible in the vision of this day. By rejoicing as Jews we are accentuating our Americanism.

And in similar manner the pride of our Americanism which possesses our heart and is yearning for expression today, is not a protest against, it is a proclamation of our fidelity to our Judaism. Like America, Judaism has been appointed to pattern the richer diversities of polychrome human life. Its aspects are many; its vocalizations numerous. Catholic Israel wears neither the uniform of military barracks nor the livery of the penitentiary. Its is Joseph's coat of many colors. This continent has augmented the prophecies and proclamations of Judaism by another variation. This new articulation again is not rigid. It is vital and therefore flexible. In this its elasticity and vitality American Judaism only conforms to the historic plasticity of Pan-Judaism and carries it out to fuller productivity. It looks like an accident that we were directed at the watershed Americanward while millions of brothers were sent into Russia. To our lot fell American citizenship, to theirs slave service in the house of bondage more oppressive than ever was Mizraim. But that "accident" signifies duty. In emphasizing now our Americanism we vow to be true all the more devotedly to the obligation that our Judaism imposes.

In fact, he is ignorant of the implications of Americanism and Judaism both who would hold that between them towers a mountain range decreeing and enforcing

their divergent separation. The contrast not to say conflict between them, I know, is commonly summarized in the statement that America names the civilization of hopeful prospect, Judaism that of regretful retrospect. The latter is a tearful memory, the former a joyful anticipation. Tradition is Judaism's store; outlook America's strength. No more arrogant misconception was ever coined than this artfully pointed antithesis. Judaism is, if anything, the *one* religion of impatient prospect and ecstatic prevision of the unborn to-morrow. America has its traditions as clearly determinative as are the influences of the past that anchor Judaism to its historic moorings. The traditions of America reach back further than the discovery of the continent. Our jurisprudence is grounded on the old common law of England. And in these precolonial traditions which have been among the most prolific stimuli of American thought, conduct and character, Judaism has had a dominant part. In the "May-flower" *our* Bible crossed the Atlantic. At Plymouth Rock in sober reality the Pentateuch was recognized as one of the inspirations of the young commonwealth. The Puritans were, indeed, more Hebraic than were the Jews who landed thirty-six years later. Narrow were they, but their narrowness was ransomed by their strength. Serious were they, but their seriousness dowered them with the fortitude without which none may hope to yoke untamed nature to his purposes. Puritan Hebrewism alone enabled the pilgrims to exercise dominion over the wilds of their new home. This puritan spirit was nursed at the breast of Jewish literature. It was the gift laid by old Judaism into the cradle of this new civilization. It had share in preparing the advent of the era of independence, as in the thinking of the

men that later phrased our political documents undoubtedly Old Testament principles had had determinating influence.

One who can pierce through verbal husk to inner kernel can harbor no doubt on the essential concordance of Americanism and Judaism. The stronger the Jew in us, the more loyal the American in us will grow to be. What is the fundamental announcement of Judaism? You say the "unity of God." This may and may not name the characteristic element. What if the One God were conceived of as a dark frowning despot? There have been those among our enemies to misconstrue in this wise the meaning of our monotheism. They have said that the Jew in declaring his God to be One proclaims the rulership of an autocrat whose caprice alone tempered by bribes is the final arbiter of the world's and the human race's fate. This monotheism, they proceed to explain, is therefore differentiated from polytheism only in its numerial notation. I adduce this misrepresentation for the purpose of demonstrating the advisability of qualifying our definition. Ethical is the attribute usually introduced to distinguish the monotheism of Judaism. But what does the phrase signify? A German thinker of fame tells us that all religion is anthropology. In the doctrine concerning man flowers into view the true content of our consciousness of God's all pervading, all sustaining presence. One God is the highest expression of our conviction that as every man is created in the image of God every man by his birthright is the equal of every other man. Every man as partaking of divinity has a value which is independent of all the accidents due to the action of the watersheds. Man having a value inherent in his

humanity has personality and therefore has no price. Things may be purchased, persons cannot. The value of man is inexpressible in terms of the market. Men are not like the products of mine or mill equivalented in coin. Low or lofty every man incarnates something inalienable which is not affected by circumstance. In this something roots his free sovereignty.

Is not America's political creed the practical execution and activization of these fundamental conceptions of Judaism? Judaism's philosophy spreads the basis whereon rests the political practice of America. No other justification is there for the assumption that men are born free and equal than the conception of man as the incarnation of the divine, his personality constituting his unpurchasable worth and being the exponent of the One in whose image all alike are created.

This inalienable freedom of man is the freedom to live out the law of his being. Law and freedom are not contraries; they are complementaries. Judaism the religion of freedom was of necessity also that of the Law. To whatever degree the Talmudic system through micrology may have mechanicalized the Law, none who understands the character of Judaism but must insist that liberty to activize the freedom which it posits as inherent in man's participation in divinity, postulates submission to the supreme law of moral majesty and final supremacy. The law of the moral order is imperfectly expressed in the self-given law of state and society. Law is liberty potentialized, liberty is law actualized. The American's passion for liberty vouchsafed by law and for law grounded in liberty is foreshadowed and sanctified in the teachings of Judaism.

But the congruence of Judaism and Americanism extends further. Judaism postulates co-operation and co-ordination, as the principle of organized society. In the chapter all the richer in truth because it echoes old mythology, which records the creation of man, the duty and destiny of this last of God's creative acts is defined as rulership over all the preceding works of God. "They," in the plural shall have dominion, is the phraseology of the account. In other words *one* man is incompetent to fulfill this appointment. *No* man may be spared in the realization of this aim. Through co-operation and co-ordination of effort and purpose in ever larger scope the divinely decreed destiny will be attained. Our political method is co-operative and establishes the co-ordination of the various organs. Our national constitution is often described as a noble compromise. It had to be this as exponential of the principles under which alone freedom and law can be made effective, viz., co-operation and co-ordination, But not only that written charter, the very life of the nation's plan of self-government is imbued with these principles and informed by them. Home autonomy and national authority are the two poles. America begins with the free individual, leads him for co-operation with other free individuals, his equals, along ascending steps to come to the town-meeting which then expands into the municipality and county, these autonomous corporations growing into the state and the states finally constituting the Union. Above the Union the unwritten yet wonderfully effective Highest Law, the law not only of this nation but of all nations, the Law which is the outflow of the Moral Order of the Universe, the moral meaning of all humanity's strivings

and struggles. If the Jewish Commonwealth was a Theocracy, our government is also in the true sense of the term theocratic. The implications of the belief in the One God are basic to our democracy.

Often antagonism is predicated of Judaism as of religion in general to the buoyant energetic spirit of America, its assertive self-conscious self-reliant realism. How far this suspicion is justified in the case of other religions, it is not for me to verify. Against Judaism the imputation cannot be maintained. I know that in some synagogues the conceit has been encouraged which would make of Judaism another scheme of salvation, a preparation for and an assurance of immortality. Under this misapprehension, indeed, Judaism would have little sympathy with the realities of this world; nor would it have any but an indistinct message for this life. But is other-worldliness the dominant in Judaism's proclamation or the inspiration of its prophecy? Clearly not. Judaism would inform this life, this world. It would through its spirit transmute conditions and characters here and now. It was the first to pray "Thy Kingdom come." But this kingdom, this *'Olam ha-ba* was not beyond the cloud. Its portals were not those of the grave. That world to be which is the vision of Israel's hope and faith is this world of ours reconstituted under the sanctifying reforming sway of justice, righteousness and love. With justice triumphant, righteousness socialized, Judaism hails the advent of the Messianic age when conditions on earth will be such that to no man is denied opportunity to realize his own divinity. Therefore the dominion of religion according to our doctrine is co-extensive with the range of life. Rail out of the plentitude of your prejudices at Talmudic ritualism! That ritualism

is perhaps the caricature but still the expression of the vital truth that nothing in life is indifferent to religion. The most trivial acts are tremendous acts. There is no divide at which the secular parts company from the sacred. Religion must be in all things or it is in nothing. That misintrepreted phrase "My Kingdom is not of this world" as understood by Catholic Christianity and Calvinistic theology, has no place in the dictionary of Judaism.

Judaism as a religion has concern with commerce and industry. It is characteristic of Judaism's realism that on the "tables of the law" doctrine preludes duty. "Thou shalt not steal" was as solemnly thundered forth as "I am the Eternal." This construction of Judaism as ideal realism, as passion for righting the things of this world, as preparation not for death but for the perfect "world to be" the perfect state and social order of the future, is not new. It is the burden of the prophets' censure and caution; it is the content of Pentateuchal legislative provision. The Rabbis express this conviction when they observe that the Torah was not given to the Angels and describe the dramatic reception of Moses in the council-chamber of God when come to claim for earth the Torah. The angels objected. But at the bidding of the Holy One, the son of Amram proves that angels need not the Law; that its commands apply to men and earth alone. How far have they strayed from genuine Judaism who would have the Jewish pulpit be silent on the injustices of earth, the maladjustment of society and under the plea that Temple and Synagogue must be sacred to *religion* would have religion shrink into a contrivance to arouse pleasurable emotions in the worshiper, ecstatic sensuous foregleams of heaven's felici-

ties; into an apothecary's laboratory where patent drugs are concocted for the easing of heart-ache, or opiates are held in readiness for the dulling of grief and pain at the death of dear ones. Religion consoles and eases but only when it stimulates to action when it quickens conscience and directs aright conduct. Remember great Rabbis exposed the iniquity of negro slavery from their pulpits. Remember that our greatest Reform preacher David Einhorn used to say "no politics in religion but by all means religion in politics." Negro slavery has been wiped out, but alas! other and worse slavery still prevails in this world of ours. Shall they who hear the clanking of the chains forego speaking though their old Jewish prayer-book praises God thrice daily for having led His people from bondage to slavery? Widows and orphans are robbed. Does only to the miserable sneak thief that picks our pocket apply "Thou shalt not steal!" and not as solemnly to the shrewd manipulators who have not scrupled to juggle with trust funds, the accumulations of the nation's savings, the sacrifices of heads of families solicitous that their wives and children shall not be left to the cruel mercy of a cold selfish world? Ah, they know not their Judaism who would have it be a conventional badge of spiritual—God save the mark!—respectability. No, Judaism is for this world! Its genius of hopeful realism has syllabled the spiritual message which a people like that of the United States is in need of. Because its kingdom is not beyond the clouds but a vision of justice and freedom realized in the tents of man, Judaism strikes the note that sets vibrating the heart of America similarly attuned to energetic realism, similarly tender to the sufferer from injustice, similarly

hopeful of the future dawn of universal peace and liberty.

Our reform Judaism has come to understand in fullest measure this concordance of its own genius with that of the institutions and the soul of America. We feel that if anywhere on God's footstool our Messianic vision will be made real, it is in this land where a new humanity seems destined to arise. Not to Jerusalem are our eyes turned, but to God! We cannot honestly declare that we are here in exile. We cannot honestly petition that we be led back to Palestine as our country. We have a country which is ours by the right of our being identified with its destinies, our being devoted to its welfare, our sharing its trials, our rejoicing in its triumphs. Two hundred and fifty years has the Jew sojourned in this country. He is not an alien here. His views of liberty and law, of man's inalienable rights and duties hallowed by the sublimities of his religion, are in creative concordance with the distinctive principles pillaring American civilization.

Not an alien, the Jewish American has the right to ask that now when in darkest Europe humanity is outraged, this, his land, remain hospitable to all that would escape from the hell of persecution and intolerance and like the Pilgrim fathers of Puritan faith and the first Jews, the vanguard of the million and two hundred thousand American Jews, would make this land their home. The Jew in America, as we have been told this very morning, has been faithful to his pledges. The community at large was not burdened in consequence of its generous and just policy of the open door. Whatever may come now, we shall assume our responsibility without haggling.

We may claim to have been originators and discov-

crers in one field, that of the philanthropies. But I fear the staff of the leader is about to fall from our hands. We have become wedded too blindly to institutionalism. It is the line of least resistance, I know; but in moral life the line of least resistance is always of evil. Individualization is costly and our local institutions plead for more liberal support. The middle class does its duty. Of those that are below the middle line, in justice nothing can be asked. There are, however, men in this city who through the opportunities offered them in America have come into possession of more than what they or theirs can ever need, who have received as reward for their labor, I grant, large returns from society. They now must remember that they are the stewards of their surplus, not its irresponsible owners. It is for them to place our charities in this city on a sound basis. Is there one of this class who may urge that if he doubles his subscription of $2,000 a year he will suffer want, or his capital be impaired? None of them spends his income, and some of them cannot spend even the interest on their yearly income. To them is addressed the appeal of this day. I have but scant affection for the very rich Jews of New York, and they have no patience with me, I dare say. But whatever arrogance they may display in their dealings with rabbi or minister, they have recognized what they owe to the community. The New York institutions are supported in the main by the richest men. That is the right way. The men of modest means, those that make an honorable living, may and should contribute whatever they can spare, but they are not able to carry the load. It is the clear duty of ten or twelve men in this city to carry the main burden. They need only double their yearly sub-

scriptions. This will ruin none; it will help us all. That should be their way of celebrating this, our memorial hour. Think of what you were when you came here. How much did you have? One of you has told me that his whole assets consisted of a basket of apples, and he had to dispose of them quickly, for one of the stock had begun to rot. That was his beginning. What has been his success after this deal in apples? You would know if I dared mention his name. Yet his experience is typical. Will he claim that if he doubles his subscription to the charities, large in the lump as now it is, that his business will be ruined, his children will have to face want, his grandchildren will be mercilessly exposed to the winter's cruel blasts? Is he not able to repay in this slight way the bounty which American life has placed under his control as the honestly won reward for his honestly performed work? Would it have been possible for him in Europe to rise as he has risen here? Is it not his duty to make the rise of others easier?

We must prepare for the other contingencies that are impending. I personally do not believe that De Witte's promises will be realized. Of course these, my oft expressed misgivings, are due to my not having been invited to kow-tow to De Witte; if I had been taken along I should trumpet to-day a different tune. That is one of the many truthful things circulated about me; let him who wishes, if it affords him pleasure, construe my opinions in this wise. I believe I could have seen the Russian envoy by merely sending him a request for an audience. The Rabbi of Sinai Congregation ceases to be an obscure individual at times and takes on representative character even if he be not at the head of a secret order or a magnate of Wall Street.

I do not believe that the poor premier even if he have the will has the power to redeem his pledge. We must face the sad situation as it is. I myself, an immigrant, and you, the children of immigrants, if not immigrants yourselves, must prepare to receive new thousands of immigrants from Russia, which is a hell, from Roumania, which is an inferno. We must ransom the pledge given by those who settled 250 years ago, that "none of ours shall be a burden on the community." In this awful calamity all American Jewry must band and stand together. It is a duty we owe to Judaism and to America; one of the many obligations in which our Judaism emphasizes what our Americanism tokens; in which our Americanism proves that it is harmoniously attuned to the most profound and most solemn declarations of our Judaism. The flag shall welcome the new pilgrims, and our faith shall make them know that their tottering steps shall be supported and their trembling hands shall be upheld after the terrible afflictions laid on them in the land of their birth, the land of despotic brutality, of dehumanized barbarism.

Great is the joy which may possess our heart. Our escutcheon as Americans is without stain. We have had a share in the making of this nation. In the mine and in the mill, at the lathe and at the loom, in counting room and council chamber the Jew has been at work for two centuries and a half for his America. He has sentried his nation's camp; he has been in the mast's lookout on his nation's ships; he has gone out to battle and he was among them that fell at the firing line. Officer, private, whatever his rank, when the nation asked for life or limb, he did not hesitate to offer the sacrifice. In institutions of learning the Jew has made his mark. In the walks of enterprise his individ-

uality has been felt as a telling potency in the development of the greater aims of American energy. In the professions he stands high; on the bench he has often had representation, of the best and by the best; in the pulpits of the land the Jew has not been in the la t and lowest ranks. In Boston, I believe, these days they will commemorate Garrison's services. This offers an opportunity to dwell once more upon facts often overlooked, and therefore all the more worthy of being pointed out, that in that struggle against slavery none was more eager, none was more enthusiastic than the leader of American Reform Judaism. And in evidence how intensely wedded to liberty is Judaism, his voice found strong support in the pulpit of the most orthodox Portuguese synagogue of Philadelphia. Ready to die, if necessary, among those that spoke against slavery, at risk of life and position, were David Einhorn and Sabbato Morais.

We have earned the right to call this our country. The future will place new solemn obligations upon us for the country's sake and as Judaism's consecration; we shall not shirk our duties. Happy we American Jews that have a country. America is ours. We can sing with all others,

"My country 'tis of thee! sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where *my* fathers died, land of *our* Pilgrims'
pride."

The watershed separates raindrops and snowflakes to divergent destiny. Race, religion, birth and condition also seem to divide. But on the heights the line of separation is thin; and in duty again all difference

of direction is consecrated to unity of purpose. In our nation no divides but are instrumentalities of service. Clinging to his Judaism, the Jew will be a more strenuous, a more loyal, a more enthusiastic American.

May God bless our country; keep it in His protection. May His light shine out o'er it, and His peace abide and abound in it. This is the prayer of the Jew on this, the Jewish-American anniversary day of joy and solemn resolves. Answer it, God in heaven, in Thy mercy. Amen, Amen!

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